

My name is Sr. Marie Puleo. I am the interim president of Carney Hospital but that is not why I address you tonight. I am here as a resident of this community. I was born and raised in Dorchester and I live several blocks from Carney. My parents have lived here their whole lives and use Carney as their hospital.

As a Franciscan, I have taken a vow of poverty and dedicated my life to caring for others. In a prior life I opened and directed one of the first AIDS community centers in the country and co-founded the National Catholic AIDS Network. I have witnessed great sadness. One of the lowest points of my life, however, came two years ago. As then Senior Vice President of Mission for Caritas I was well aware that Carney would likely close or cease to be an acute care hospital. I prayed and I hoped. Many of the people in this room came forward adding their voices, for that I will always be grateful. Somehow, despite almost everyone else's recommendation, Caritas made a commitment to keep Carney open as an acute care hospital.

The underlying issues at Carney Hospital however have not changed. Our geography, our payor mix, our facilities have not miraculously improved. This year President Obama's Health Care bill acknowledged the challenges

these communities face by appropriating \$11.5 Billion for investments in community health centers. These funds are much needed.

Unfortunately, funds were not appropriated for community hospitals working in these same neighborhoods. As the Attorney General moves forward in the analysis, I ask her to keep several points in mind.

First, as has been articulated, Carney is in a dire financial situation and must function within a system for its viability. In a stand alone analysis Carney's debt and liability, not to mention capital needs, can never be supported by its earnings. For Carney's sake, for my well being, for my parents and for the rest of Dorchester, we need to view the deal in the aggregate. Second, to pull any funds out of Carney would jeopardize its long term survival. As we saw two years ago, for-profit, not-for-profit, it doesn't matter. If a hospital routinely loses money, it will close. To be clear, it wasn't just local authorities that recommended Carney's closing two years ago; two large Catholic non-profit organizations also made this recommendation. To maximize Carney's long term chances we, Carney, need every penny. We need to address our pension, our facilities, and expand our programs. To think that Carney has gone from pauper to benefactor in two years is absurd.

Third, as organizations ask for funds to be diverted you must look at the past and present commitments these organizations have made, or are willing to make, to keep care in Dorchester. If the community does not embrace Carney, does not use Carney, it can not survive. A hospital's volume is obviously important to its fiscal viability, but it is every bit as critical to its quality, its infrastructure, and the scope of its programs. In the end it's simple, if the community does not support Carney no degree of commitment from me, Dr. de la Torre, Cerberus or the government will save Carney. Madam Attorney General, members of the Department, I urge you to consider these three specific points as you deliberate on the future of my hospital.